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DRAFT PROGRAM OF THE COURSE 'PRINCIPLES OF MARXIST  
ETHICS' FOR HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

- USSR -

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of Philosophy), No 6, Moscow, June 1959, pages 178-185.]

a) Topics and Number of Hours

Topic I. Marxist Ethics as a Science	2 hours
Topic II. Morality as a Form of Social Consciousness	2 hours
Topic III. The Problem of Freedom and Necessity and the Criterion of Communist Morality	2 hours
Topic IV. Communist Morality: A Higher Stage in the Moral Progress of Mankind	2 hours
Topic V. The Principles of Communist Morality	6 hours
Topic VI. The Categories of Communist Morality	2 hours
Topic VII. Moral Qualities and Traits in the Character of Fighters for Communism	2 hours
Topic VIII. Moral Traits of the Family and Daily Living in the Socialist Society	4 hours
Topic IX. Problems of Indoctrinating Workers in the Spirit of Communist Morality	6 hours
Topic X. Criticism of Contemporary Bourgeois Philosophical-Ethical Systems	4 hours
Total	32 hours

N. B. A lecture on professional ethics (medical, civil  
service, diplomatic, theatrical, sports, etc.) may be introduced  
into the syllabus for the course, depending upon the special work  
being taken by the students at the higher educational institution.  
It should follow the Topic VIII in the present syllabus.

\*The present draft syllabus for a course on the "Principles of  
Marxist Ethics" was drawn up by a commission of the Ministry of  
Higher Education USSR and the Institute of Philosophy Acad. Sci.  
USSR under the direction of A. F. Shishkin. The commission requests  
that the readers of this journal send their comments on this draft  
syllabus for purposes of its improvement. (Ed.)

## b) Syllabus for the Course

### Topic I. The Object of Marxist Ethics

Ethics is the study of morality. The following are the basic questions with which ethics has been concerned throughout its history: the problem of the source of morality (moral views and feelings, norms of behavior, categories of good and evil, etc.); the criteria for ethics; ethical responsibility and judgment; the means of the moral education of the individual. The place of ethics in pre-Marxist Philosophical systems. The class nature of ethics.

Reflection of the struggle of the two philosophical trends in ethical systems. The philosophical-ethical systems of the idealists (Plato, Kant); the relationship of these systems to religious moral doctrines. Critique of religious moral doctrines and the search of the philosophical materialists (Epicurus, Spinoza, and the French materialists 18 th Century) for an earthly foundation for morality. The revolutionary-democratic ethic of Chernyshevskiy -- an outstanding contribution to the scientific treatment of problems of ethics. General shortcomings of pre-Marxist ethics deriving from the idealist view of history.

Historical conditions and theoretical prerequisites for the development of the Marxist theory of morality. The materialist understanding of history as a key to solving the problem of the origin and nature of morality, and its role in social life. The revolution carried out by Marx and Engels in the sphere of ethics. The development by Marx and Engel of a rationale for the foundations of a proletarian, communist ethic. Defense and development of Marxist ethics by V. I. Lenin.

The Marxist ethic as a science of the nature of society and the laws of moral development, the laws governing the development of communist morality, its principles and norms, and its role in the struggle for communism.

The contemporary period of expanded communist building in our country, and the tasks of the communist indoctrination of the workers, including moral indoctrination. The significance of the Marxist ethic in accomplishing these tasks. The relationship of ethics to psychology and pedagogy. Basic problems of the course on Marxist ethics.

### Topic II. Morality as a Form of Social Consciousness

Moral attitudes, feelings, views, norms, and rules of behavior as a part of the superstructure built on economic relations. The origin of morality. Historical types of morality. Marxism on the historical character of moral ideas and concepts (good and evil, etc.).

The class nature of morality. The role of morality in the class struggle. The basic features of morality in particular occupations.

The complex nature of the dependence of morality on economic relations in a class society, and a critique of the vulgar understanding of this dependence, relative independence in the development of morality and ethical ideas. The adaptation of old moral requirements and traditions to new historical traditions. The preservation of particular moral norms and judgements under changing economic conditions.

The relationship and interdependence between morality and other elements of the superstructure. Politics, law, and morality, and their interrelations under capitalism and socialism, Art and morality. Science and morality. Religion and morality. The interest of the exploiter classes in a religious sanction for their class morality. Means of overcoming religious ideas of morality in the consciousness of members of our society.

### Topic III. The Problem of Freedom and Necessity and the Criterion of Communist Morality

Marxism on freedom and necessity in history. Critique of indeterminism and fatalism. Marx and Engels against replacing an objective analysis of economic relations by a moralizing critique of those relations. The objective analysis of social relations and their moral evaluation. The criterion for the moral evaluation of social relations. The concept of justice, its concrete-historical content and role in the class struggle.

The determined nature of human acts and behavior, and relative freedom of will; the possibility for a free choice of acts and their correct evaluation. The basic condition for the free choice of an act -- the rationale of its necessity. The limits of free choice under capitalism.

Socialism and the flowering of human freedom, based on a knowledge of necessity and control over it. The further development of freedom in the transition to communism. Communism as a higher stage in the development of society and man, and harmony between personal and social interests. Communism as a moral ideal, and the criterion of communist morality. The objectively-moral nature of acts which are in harmony with the movement toward communism and with the struggle for communism.

The growing moral responsibility of human beings for their acts under conditions of socialism and the transition to communism. The role of actions and motives for actions in the moral evaluation of acts. The necessity for a comprehensive approach to the moral evaluation of an act. The relationship between the moral evaluation of an act and other kinds of social evaluations (political, juridical, esthetic). The role of communist morality in the struggle

for communism.

#### Topic IV. Communist Morality: a Higher Stage in the Moral Progress of Mankind

Marxism on progress in the moral sphere. The contradictions between moral progress in the history of the class society. Engels on the role of morality in the history of the class society. The popular masses as creators and preservers of the best moral values of mankind. The class and general democratic content in morality and ethical systems of advanced classes expressing the need for social development and the interests of the masses. The reactionary character of the morality of the obsolete classes.

The superiority of proletarian, communist morality over bourgeois morality. The class morality of the proletariat as a weapon in its struggle for the new society. The objective conditions governing the development of a proletarian, communist morality. The role of the Marxist Party in the development of communist morality.

The confluence of class elements and general human elements in the proletarian, communist morality, and its correspondence to the basic interests of the peasantry, the laborers of the colonies and the democratic intelligentsia. Engels on the truth of proletarian morality. The critique of ethical dogmatism and relativism. The development of proletarian, communist morality under socialism and communism. The liberation of morality from class restrictions under conditions of the final victory of communism.

The great moral influence of communism on the laboring masses of all countries. The moral significance of social movements for peace, democracy, and the national independence of peoples. Participation in such movements as an index of the development of feeling of civic and moral responsibility for social progress in the workers of all countries.

#### Topic V. The Principles of Communist Morality

The problems of the harmonious combination of personal and social interests as the basic problem of morality. Untenability of the attempt to find a theoretical solution for this problem in pre-Marxist ethics. The impossibility of its practical solution in a society with class antagonisms. Individualism and egoism as the basic principle of human relation in the bourgeois society. The anti-humanistic and anti-social nature of contemporary bourgeois individualism. The apologia for bourgeois individualism in certain contemporary bourgeois theories of ethics. Formulas for restraining "extreme individualism" while preserving capitalism in contemporary bourgeois ethics, and the untenability of such formulas.

The objective conditions for the correct combination of personal and social interests under socialism and communism, for the flowering of the human personality, and for the formation of its high moral qualities and integrated character. The Marxist-Leninist world view as a theoretical basis for communist morality.

The struggle for strengthening and perfecting communism, and devotion to communism as the general principle of communist morality. The unity of word and deed, conviction and acts, ends and means in the struggle for communism. Intransigence toward enemies of communism as an integral part of the political and moral consciousness and behavior of fighters for communism.

Collectivism -- solidarity among workers in the struggle for communism -- as the basic principle of communist morality deriving from the conditions of the struggle of the working class for a new society. The manifestation of proletarian solidarity, and the subordination of personal interests to the common cause in the struggle against capitalism. The principle of collectivism as an expression of attitudes of socialist mutual assistance and cooperation among persons under socialism. The common interest of the workers under socialism as the interest of their joint activity. Conditions for the correct combination of personal and social interests under socialism. Application of the principle of personal material interest in labor and indoctrinating the masses in a spirit of devotion to social interests. Objective prerequisites for indoctrinating the collectivist man and the role of the subjective factor (ideological influence). Characteristic features of comradeship among persons in a socialist society. The moral responsibility of the collectives for the behavior of the individual, and the moral responsibility of the individual for the behavior of other members of the collective. Vestiges of individualism in the consciousness and behavior of human beings, and means of overcoming these vestiges.

The communist attitude toward labor and public property as the most important principle of communist morality. Progressive democratic thought of the past on the relationship between morality and labor producing material commodities. Marxism on the role of labor in transforming nature and man himself. The influence of the "school of hard knocks" of factory labor on workers under capitalism: developing courageous and bold persons capable of combatting capitalism. The ambiguous attitude of the worker toward labor in a capitalist enterprise.

The role of labor at a socialist enterprise in developing a new attitude toward labor and toward public property, and in developing new labor disciplines. The ethical significance of the new attitude toward labor -- solicitude for social interests, and respect for all useful labor. Development of self knowledge in the worker as a member of the great army of labor and a master of

production. The socialist and communist toward labor as a measure of the worker's devotion to the common cause of the struggle for communism.

Development of the socialist, communist attitude toward labor in our country -- from communist subbotniki [labor given freely to the state of off-days or overtime] to brigades of communist labor. Brigades of communist labor as an embodiment of the unity of labor, knowledge, and morality typical of communism and as evidence of the gradual transformation of labor into a prime vital requirement. Means of transforming labor into a vital requirement. The growing role of moral stimuli toward labor with the development of the socialist society.

Ethical problems of the labor collective (based on the experience of brigades of communist labor). Means of combatting unconscientious attitudes toward labor, public property, and socialist labor discipline.

Socialist humanism as a principle of the morality of fighters for communism. Its correspondence to the new relations among human beings in the socialist society. Its direct connection with the principle of proletarian socialist collectivism and to the new attitude toward labor.

Marx on the dependence of the individual's spiritual qualities upon the qualities of his social relations; on the dependence of the development of personal inclinations and personal freedom on the conditions of a genuine collectivism. Solicitude for the well-being and development of the individual in a socialist society.

Prerequisites to the well-rounded and harmonious development of the individual during the period of transition to communism. Man as the highest value. The inadmissibility of an indifferent, bureaucratic attitude toward man. Belief in man, love for him, respect for his dignity, solicitude for his development, standards for his conduct, and the struggle against all forms of human enslavement and gradation as the basic features of socialist humanism. Increasingly high standards for the behavior of man, for his organizational qualities, discipline, conformity to legal norms and the norms of morality under contemporary conditions. Traditions of the past and qualitatively new features in socialist humanism. Critique of pseudo-humanistic doctrines of "universal love," "non-resistance to evil," etc.

The profoundly humanistic character of the entire policy of the party and the soviet state, aimed at improving the material well-being of the workers and the flowering of their cultural life, at strengthening peace and friendship among all peoples.

Socialist internationalism and patriotism as principles of communist morality. The problem of combining national and international interests, and its political and moral significance. The attitude toward the fatherland under capitalism and socialism. Love

for the fatherland, the feeling of national honor, and loyalty to the cause of the international solidarity of the workers in the struggle for socialism as features of the moral character of human beings in the socialist society. Mutual assistance and solidarity among the peoples of the socialist countries, and their disinterested aid to one another as an embodiment of brotherhood among peoples. The attitude toward the socialist camp as a criterion of socialist internationalism. The great moral significance of the struggle for peace among all peoples. Indoctrinating the workers in a spirit of love for the socialist fatherland, in a spirit of the most complete national equality and brotherhood, in a spirit of fulfilling their international duties toward the workers of all countries. The 21st Congress of the CPSU on the international duty of workers of the USSR.

Critique of "national egoism" and "private-egotistical cosmopolitanism" engendered by the bourgeois society. Overcoming vestiges of nationalism (national conceit, arrogance, enmity and contempt toward persons of other nationality, etc.) in human consciousness and behavior.

#### Topic VI. Categories of Communist Morality

The social content of the categories of communist morality and their connection with its principles.

Duty. Critique of the concept of duty in pre-Marxist ethics. The Marxist ethic on the social origin and social content of duty. Duty toward comrades and duty toward the people and mankind. Duty and conviction. Duty and desire. Duty and discipline. Inculcating a feeling of duty toward the people in the younger generation. V. I. Lenin on the duty of youth in his speech to the 3rd All-Russian Congress of the RKSM [Young Communist League of Russia]. The specific content of the social duty of workers and youth under the temporary conditions.

Conscience. Man's awareness and feeling of moral responsibility for his behavior, a means of choosing and judging thoughts and acts. Moral satisfaction and moral self-criticism (shame). Critique of the abstract understanding of conscience typical of religious and idealist ethics. The concrete-historical (class) character of conscience. Conditions for the development of the feeling of conscience in a socialist society. The conscience of the socialist man as a feeling uniting the individual with the people, and with its struggle for communism. The integral connection between the sentiment of conscience and the sentiment of duty. Conscience and public opinion as forms of the moral judgment of acts.

Honor and dignity. The predominant concepts of honor and dignity in the old society as an expression of individualism. Aristocratic and bourgeois concepts of honor and human dignity.



Religious and idealist mystification of honor and dignity in old ethical systems. The sentiment of honor in the laboring mass. Unfavorable conditions for the development of the sentiment of honor and personal dignity in the parasitic society. The dependence of the sentiment of the personal dignity of the proletariat upon its connection with the collective of fighters. The socialist attitudes toward labor and unquestioning defense of the fatherland as the basic criterion of honor and human dignity under socialism. The integral relation between the sentiment of honor and the honor of the collective. The social recognition of personal merit as a moral incentive toward new achievements. The struggle against individual ambition the the pursuit of personal fame and manifestations of vestiges of individualism.

Happiness. The concept of happiness in pre-Marxist ethics. Engels' critique of Feuerbach's "Striving Toward Happiness" as a basis for morality. The impossibility of satisfying this striving in the case of an egotistical individual. Critique of the mystical religious interpretation of happiness as something dwelling within us and above us. Relating personal happiness to the happiness of the people. Happiness as the fullest application of the individual spiritual and physical powers in the struggle for the common cause. The flowering of the creative abilities of the individual in the common struggle for communism as an index of the happiness of individuals in the socialist society.

#### Topic VII. Moral Qualities and Traits in the Character of Fighters for Communism

Moral convictions and moral sentiments, and the necessity for their unity in behavior. The moral qualities of man as requirements of morality having become integral properties and sentiments of the individual. The necessity for transforming the aforementioned moral requirements (solidarity, love of labor, love for the fatherland, duty, etc.) into moral qualities of individuals manifested in actions and deeds. Critique of the "virtues" imposed by religious morality and adapted to the task of the spiritual enslavement of the masses.

The socio-humanistic, democratic content of the moral feelings and qualities of fighters for communism. Simplicity and modesty, righteousness and honor, unity of words and deeds, and high standards for oneself and others as moral qualities. Critique of arrogance and conceit, hypocrisy and dishonesty, as manifestations of individualism. Character traits inculcated by the socialist collective; will, reliability, endurance, perseverance, boldness, and their moral significance. The moral character of the manliness inculcated in the socialist collective. Manliness and heroism. Mass heroism in labor under socialism. Heroism and self sacrifice. Communist idealism, devotion to principle, and belief in victory, as the origin

of the moral sentiments and qualities of fighters for communism and the basic factor in moral behavior.

#### Topic VIII. Moral Traits of the Family and Daily Living in the Socialist Society

Society and the personal life. The bourgeois view of the personal life as something separate and independent from society -- as a "private matter." The Marxist critique of this view. The influence of social relations on home life. The unity of moral requirements for social life and home life. The "birthmarks" of old society in homelife and their effect on social life. The necessity for combatting violations of the elementary rules of society and immorality in private life (drunkedness, hooliganism, improper attitudes toward women, the family, children, etc.). The role of soviet law in communist morality, and combatting violations of the rules of society and immorality in private life. The 21st Congress on the further improvement of the living conditions of the workers and the tasks of educational work.

Problems of civilized behavior in everyday dealings with other people. Rules of civilized behavior, and disapproval of manifestations of philistinism and cynicism in human relations.

Friendship as the expression of personal attachment, and personal inclinations among human beings in labor and social relations. Examples of friendship in the old society. The indispensability of interests as social significance to a firm friendship. Unfavorable conditions for friendship in the world of private property interests. Examples of friendship from the history of the revolutionary movement. The friendship between Marx and Engels as a fine example of friendship based on serving the cause of the working class. Friendship under socialism between persons from different social groups, of different nationalities, occupations, and generations. Basic features of friendship among soviet citizens. Examples of friendship among soviet citizens in literature and art. Friendship and honor vis-a-vis the collective, and the ability to subordinate personal matters to the common cause. Friendship and self-criticism. Combatting vestiges of the old concept of friendship based on an opposition between the personal life and socially significant tasks.

Love, marriage, and the family. The subservient of woman in the class society and the predominant influence of particular economic calculations of the sentiment of love in marriages in the ruling classes. Marriage as a commercial transaction in the bourgeois milieu, adultery and prostitution as ordinary supplements to such a marriage. The influence of capitalist exploitation on the family in a proletarian milieu. Engels on the nature of marriage in the society of the future. The socialist society and the creation of prerequisites for a sound marriage (abolishment of exploitation

and the inequality of women, improvement in material well-being, admission of women into production and social activity, etc.). Love as a moral basis for marriage. Chernyshevskiy on the role of the emotion of love in the life and behavior of married couples. Lenin's critique of the bourgeois standard of "free love." acknowledging no discipline or responsibility before society. The necessity for self control and self discipline in love. Friendship, mutual solicitude, and the obligations of marriage partners; their obligations toward children and toward society in the Soviet family; the obligations of children toward their parents. The role of the family in educating the younger generation. Combatting manifestations of instability in family life. The inadmissibility of petty meddling in personal life.

#### Topic IX. Problems of Indoctrinating the Workers in a Spirit of Communist Morality

Critique by the founders of Marxism-Leninism of the nature and methods of moral education recommended by the old religious and idealist (e. g., Kantian) ethic. Impossibility of moral education by means of moral "self-improvement" of the individual in isolation from society. The relationship between educating the workers and their struggle for a new society, and political tasks. Lenin on the connection between politics and pedagogy. Socialism and the education of new individuals in the process of building a new society, in everyday labor, under the ideological influence of the Marxist party. Means of combatting vestiges of capitalism in the human consciousness. Traits of the moral character of soviet man.

Moral education as an integral part of communist education. Its connection with other aspects of communist education. The significance of moral education in the present period of expanded communist building.

The role of the family and school in moral education. The importance of combining school work with productive labor in the education of youth. The moral prestige of the collective and its role in moral education. A. S. Makarenko on the role of the collective in the education of man. The education of the individual and the education of the collective. The role of public opinion, the force of a progressive example, criticism, and self criticism. The necessity for an individual approach to man in the process of education.

The growing role of the state in education. Compulsion and conviction. Bringing broad masses of workers into the struggle against crime and manifestations of immorality.

Literature and art as a powerful means of educating human beings in a spirit of communist morality. Examples of new men in Soviet literature.

The role of the Komsomol in the communist education of youth.

The role of the trade unions as schools of communism.

The Marxist Party as the intelligence, conscience, and honor of an era. The role of Marxist ideas and the heroic traditions of the working class and its Marxist Party in educating the workers. The statutes of the CPSU as a code of party ethics. The life and career of V. I. Lenin as a great example of service to the cause of communism.

#### Topic X. Critique of Contemporary Bourgeois Philosophical-Ethical Systems

The crisis in bourgeois morality as a manifestation of the decline of bourgeois society. Typical features of modern bourgeois ethical theories: defense of the stagnation of capitalism, and justification of the individualism and amorality of the bourgeois "person." Intensification of subjectivism and relativism in contemporary bourgeois ethics, and its anti-scientific character.

The ethic of contemporary Positivism. The reduction of moral norms and judgements to the expression of subjective feelings, emotions, desires, and tastes of the individual. Refusal to acknowledge an objective criterion for moral evaluation. The subjectivist criterion of moral judgements (the usefulness or success of the subject in the given situation) in the ethic of Pragmatism.

Subjectivism and relativism in the ethic of Existentialism. Affirmation of the non-dependence of "moral values" on economic and social factors, and their reduction to decisions of the individual, "freely" creating the world, himself, and moral values. Pessimism as a characteristic trait of the ethic of Existentialism.

The ethic of Personalism, and its relationship to theology. Affirmation of "the freedom of the person" as a concealment of his economic and spiritual oppression under capitalism. Man as a sinful being of God and moral self improvement.

The ethic of Neo-Thomism as a revival of the medieval ethic of Thomas Aquinas and its adaptation to the modern requirements of capital and to the purposes of the spiritual enslavement of the masses. The Neo-Thomists' claims to have risen above the contradictions between the ethical principles of individualism and collectivism. The demagogic character of the moral doctrine of the Neo-Thomists and its anti-communist orientation.

The anti-scientific and reactionary character of contemporary ethical theories associated with bourgeois schools of sociology.

Critique of contemporary revisionism in the sphere of ethics. Attempts to reduce the Marxist philosophy to ethical problems, and the theory of scientific socialism to ethical socialism. The rejection of Marxist determinism. The revisionists' denial of the class character of morality in the class society, and the falsification of the Marxist ethic in a spirit of abstract humanism. Rejection of

the principles of communist morality in favor of bourgeois individualism by means of "reconciling" opposed ethical principles. The necessity for struggling for purity of the principles of communist morality against all varieties of revisionism.

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